



FAITH & REASON

THE JOURNAL OF CHRISTENDOM COLLEGE

Winter 1990 | Vol. XVI, No. 4

EDITORIAL: SIT TRANSIT GLORIA HISPANIAE



PAIN HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN A BEACON LIGHT FOR EUROPE WHOSE SOUL HAS always been Catholic even though her body be torn and bleeding. The glory of Spain still beckons to the imagination and fires the blood with recollections of Pelayo and Covadonga, El Cid and Valencia, Don Juan and Lepanto, Philip II and El Escorial. Looking at Spain is like looking into the soul of Christendom. Today it is a vision of pain and confusion which causes great concern, for it is a spiritual malady which can “cast both body and soul into Hell.”

Alas, how quickly things can change! I still retain golden memories of summers spent in Spain during the early seventies when the much maligned Franco ruled Spain. For me and many a Catholic exile adrift in a sea of secularity, Spain showed a vibrant Catholicism incarnated in a living culture. The lack of crime, the sanctity of marriage and family life mirrored in the sanctity of Sunday, made deep impressions in a heart longing for the *res Catholica*. Can a culture and society still be formed and structured by the fullness of the truth brought to man by the Incarnate Word? Was it possible to acknowledge publicly in the twentieth century the social reign of Christ the King? Spain answered these questions haunting the Catholic heart with a resounding yes. Standing in the brilliant afternoon sunlight on a Sunday, gazing at that bulwark facade of Philip's El Escorial, all things seemed possible. The Escorial architecturally is the trumpet blast of the Catholic Reformation. Its lines and the doric columns are lucid and logical like the theology of Trent.

For me it shall remain “*la octava maravilla de mundo.*” Spain possessed a culture which knew the true art of leisure and gracefulness. Yet she knew also the necessity of fighting to achieve and preserve this precious heritage. The sting of battle had been with her throughout her history and the price was high. Not far from Philip's “dwelling for God on earth” lies the Valle de los Caídos (Valley of the Fallen) where an enormous cross of gray granite pierces the blue Castillian sky. This sign of our God and our Redemption dominates the entire plain. It is of course the symbol of our civilization and captures the triumph of the human spirit caught up into the Divine. It is a stirring reminder of what it cost Spain to be a defender of the Faith, thereby defending all that is worthy of man.

Alas, how quickly things can change! This issue reveals how dramatically Spain, the Catholic bastion of Europe, has fallen.

When a Roman Catholic King who sits on the throne of Ferdinand and Isabella signs into law a bill “legalizing” the killing of defenseless unborn children, yes of Spain's own children ... what is left? Christendom is dead.

Fritz Wilhelmsen speaks eloquently of the strange new god, who like Dionysius of old is sweeping throughout the land. This new god goes by the name of democracy and calls men to drink the heady wine of self-idolatry and worship the popular will as the summum bonum. Patrick Foley and Alexandra Wilhelmsen (Fritz's daughter) take a retrospective look at the Carlist movement and its contributions to the battle for the soul of Spain in the tidal wake of the French Revolution. Finally, in this age which continues to degrade and emasculate authority, Dr. Frank examines the intricate bonds which must exist between authority and the common good.

But death and the grave could not hold him nor His Mystical Body. There will be another field of battle at another time and no doubt the sons and daughters of Spain will be numbered among the sons of light who will one day rebuild Jerusalem.

Timothy T. O'Donnell, STD

December 13, 1990

Feast of St. Lucy



Ed. note: The articles by Patrick Foley and Alexandra Wilhelmsen about Spain grew out of the session on Church and State in Spanish History and Thought in the Last Century at the sixty-seventh annual meeting of the Southwestern Social Science Association, held in Little Rock, Arkansas, in the spring of 1989. The authors wish to thank Dr. Lowell L. Blaisdell, president of the Southwest Historical Association, for inviting them to speak at the conference and Dr. Donald J. Kagay, chairman of the panel, for his helpful comments and for editing the manuscripts for publication.

